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Viewing cable 05TELAVIV6084, KIDNAPPING OF KNIGHT RIDDER JOURNALISTS

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Understanding cables

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- The top box shows each cable's unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

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| Reference ID | Created | Released | Classification | Origin |
|---------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 05TELAVIV6084 | 2005-10-14 16:16 | 2011-08-30 01:44 | CONFIDENTIAL | Embassy Tel Aviv |

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/dion-nissenbaum/>

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 006084

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/14/2015

TAGS: [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [PTER](#) [US](#) [UK](#) [GAZA](#) [DISENGAGEMENT](#)

SUBJECT: KIDNAPPING OF KNIGHT RIDDER JOURNALISTS

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Norman H. Olsen. Reason 1.
4 (B/D).

(U) This message has been cleared by Consulate General Jerusalem.

1. (C) The October 12 kidnapping of an American reporter, Dion Nissenbaum, and a British photographer, Adam Pletts, near Khan Yunis is symptomatic of the lawlessness that prevails in the Gaza Strip, according to Embassy Fatah contacts in Gaza. An influential Fatah-affiliated lawyer in Gaza City told Embassy poloff that this kidnapping -- like other recent abductions -- represented a challenge to the Palestinian Authority (PA), rather than an attack directed at specific individuals, such as these journalists.

2. (C) UN sources reported that six gunmen from the Rafah and Khan Yunis-based Al Najjar family in Gaza conducted the kidnapping. ConGen sources suggest that the motive was to put pressure on the PA to officially recruit the gunmen into PA security services and the Israeli press reports that the kidnapers had demanded that the PA raise the salaries of their relatives who serve in the Palestinian police. A Gaza-based PLC member, Abdullah Efrangi, confirmed to Embassy poloff that the perpetrators were indeed from the Al Najjar family, but noted that leaders within this large family had condemned the kidnapping: "This was a well-known, bad group from within the Al-Najar family that sought to blackmail the PA." Efrangi emphasized that this group -- which press reports have referred to as the "Black Panther" group -- is unrelated to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, a larger, more organized group affiliated loosely with the Fatah movement. Another Gaza contact who follows security issues closely indicated that this is the first time in his recollection of any group operating under that name.

3. (C) Press and UN reports highlighted the role that

Palestinian police and security officials, such as BG Jamal Kayed and Police Chief Ala Husni, played major roles in securing the quick release of the two Knight Ridder journalists, who were abducted at 1530 hours on October 12 in the Al Mawasi area, near the former Gush Katif settlement bloc west of Khan Yunis. The UN reported that members of the Salah Ed-Din brigades (military wing of the "Popular Resistance Committees") negotiated with the kidnappers for several hours in an attempt to secure their release.

14. (C) Embassy Fatah contacts confirmed that President Abbas himself had intervened to secure their release by 2100 that night. (Note: The CG and General Ward personally weighed in with Abbas' chief of staff and the Minister of Interior; see septel. End note.) Efrangi acknowledged, however, that a number of other groups outside the PA also weighed in to secure the release, and complained that the PA security forces lack the necessary means to confront the militarization of Gazan society or the threat posed by organized militias such as Hamas. Efrangi said he is confident that Fatah will be able to exert greater discipline over some organized militias. Absent jobs, trade and the opening of Rafah crossing, however, Efrangi is less sanguine about the PA's prospects for instituting the rule of law in the Gaza Strip.

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JONES